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Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

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Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. On 21 November 1997, the General Assembly adopted, without a vote, resolution 52/22, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe". By that resolution, the Assembly acknowledged the increasing contribution of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to the establishment and maintenance of international peace and security in its region. This included activities in early warning and preventive diplomacy, crisis management, arms control and disarmament, and post-crisis stabilization and rehabilitation measures. By the same resolution, the Assembly welcomed the further improvement of cooperation and coordination during the previous year between the United Nations and OSCE, and requested the Secretary-General to continue exploring with the Chairman-in-Office and the Secretary-General of OSCE possibilities for further enhancement of cooperation, information exchange and coordination.

2. By the same resolution, the General Assembly decided to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-third session the item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe", and requested the Secretary-General to submit to it at that session a report on cooperation between the United Nations and OSCE in implementation of the resolution. The present report is submitted pursuant to that request.

II. Measures of cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

3. At the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, held at Helsinki in 1992, the heads of State or Government of the participating States declared that the Conference was a regional arrangement in the sense of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. By resolution 48/5 of 13 October 1993, the General Assembly decided to invite the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE)[1] to participate in the work of the Assembly as an observer.

4. On 26 May 1993, letters were exchanged between the Secretary-General and the Chairman-in-Office of the Council of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (see A/48/185, annexes I and II). By those letters, the signatories accepted the arrangements described in the

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framework for cooperation and coordination between the two organizations (A/48/185, annex II, appendix).

5. The observer status of OSCE and the framework referred to above constitute the institutional parameters of cooperation between the United Nations and OSCE.

6. As noted in the previous reports of the Secretary-General on cooperation and coordination with OSCE submitted to the Assembly (A/48/549, A/49/529, A/50/564, A/51/489 and Add.1 and A/52/450), good contacts have been established and maintained between the Secretary-General and the Chairman-in-Office of OSCE. The Secretary-General has met regularly with both the Chairman-in-Office and Secretary-General of OSCE. Their representatives also meet United Nations officials on a regular basis at United Nations Headquarters, at the United Nations Office at Geneva and at OSCE headquarters at Vienna. Senior United Nations representatives have participated in meetings of the Permanent Council of OSCE. A senior representative of the Secretary-General addressed the most recent meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council, which was held at Copenhagen on 18 and 19 December 1997. With a view to enhancing cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, including OSCE, the Secretary-General, on 28 and 29 July 1998, organized a third meeting of the heads of regional organizations devoted to conflict prevention, in which Secretary-General of OSCE, Giancarlo Aragona, participated. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe also invited United Nations representatives to participate in a meeting of its Security Model Committee on 29 October 1998 in order to exchange views on the Platform for Cooperative Security, as part of the ongoing effort to work out an OSCE Document-Charter on European Security.

7. In continuation of an informal understanding that there should be a division of labour between the two organizations, the United Nations has retained the lead in peace-making efforts in Abkhazia, Georgia, and Tajikistan, while OSCE has retained the lead in the Republic of Moldova, South Ossetia, Georgia, and in the resolution of the conflict over Nagorny Karabakh, Azerbaijan. Specific efforts have also been made to improve consultation and cooperation in the field and between the respective headquarters. These steps have resulted in enhanced coordination with the aim of making better use of the resources of the international community in the interests of the countries being assisted.

8. During the past year, cooperation between the United Nations and OSCE has been evident at a variety of levels.

9. The past year was marked by further enhancement of the interaction between the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and OSCE, including in their field missions. An exchange of information between UNHCR and OSCE is maintained on issues of mutual interest and cooperation. Such exchanges contribute towards ensuring coordinated and complementary action between the two organizations, and include regular briefings by UNHCR to the Permanent Council of OSCE at the invitation of the Chairman-in-Office. In recognition of the rapidly growing partnership between OSCE and UNHCR in the field, the Assistant High Commissioner for Refugees was invited to address a meeting of the heads of OSCE missions and field activities on 25 June 1998, and to discuss ways of further strengthening mutual interaction in the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the countries that have emerged from the former Yugoslavia, and Albania. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees also addressed the Permanent Council of OSCE on 15 October 1998, after which a memorandum of understanding was signed between UNHCR and OSCE.

10. Partnership framework agreements were also developed during the past year between UNHCR and individual OSCE institutions. Letters were exchanged for this purpose between UNHCR and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and High Commissioner on National Minorities, respectively. The common efforts with ODIHR were focused on addressing the issue of freedom of movement and choice of place of residence in the CIS countries, as well as the restitution of the property of returnees in the Caucasus. Cooperation with the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities was centred on citizenship issues of formerly deported people in the Crimea, Ukraine, and ethnic tolerance in Central Asia.

11. In follow-up to the Regional Conference to address the Problems of Refugees, Displaced Persons, Other Forms of Involuntary Displacement and Returnees in the Countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States and Relevant Neighbouring States, UNHCR, in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and ODIHR, organized annual steering group meetings in December 1997 and June 1998 to review the progress made in the implementation of the Programme of Action adopted by the Regional Conference. In another follow-up event, UNHCR and ODIHR organized the Expert Group Meeting on Freedom of Movement and Choice of Place of Residence at Kiev, from 8 to 10 December 1997, which was also attended by representatives of the Council of Europe. The meeting initiated discussions on registration and residence permit (*propiska*) procedures and similar registration systems existing in the CIS countries and their impact on the right

of both citizens and non-citizens to freedom of movement and choice of place of residence. The most recent meeting of the Expert Group was held at Vienna in October 1998.

12. During the past year, the United Nations and OSCE took further steps to enhance cooperation in the activities for the promotion and protection of human rights. On 25 June 1998, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights addressed the Permanent Council of OSCE. On that occasion, a memorandum of understanding was signed between the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and ODIHR. Both institutions committed themselves to strengthening cooperation in support of national human rights institutions, human rights education and the human rights of women. The Office of the High Commissioner also maintained regular contact with the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities. Within the framework of technical assistance and advisory services for countries in transition, collaboration was developed in Latvia, the Republic of Moldova and other countries.

13. In January 1998, informal high-level tripartite consultations between the United Nations, OSCE and the Council of Europe were held at Geneva, under the chairmanship of OSCE. The International Committee of the Red Cross and IOM also participated. It was the seventh in a series of such consultations, which were launched in July 1994. Special emphasis was placed on regional issues. Activities in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Belarus, as well as the Caucasus and Central Asia, were reviewed. Future target-oriented meetings were discussed. As a follow-up, a target-oriented meeting on Albania was held at the headquarters of the Council of Europe at Strasbourg in April 1998.

14. The above-mentioned tripartite gathering made further advances in the sharing of information, improvement of coordination and facilitation of joint action in the field with optimal use made of available resources. The participants recognized that these meetings had proved to be effective in facilitating personal interaction, establishing new channels of communication and bridging differences in the cultures of international organizations. Given the unanimously recognized need for further coordinated efforts in the areas of democratization, the rule of law and minority rights, the participants welcomed the newly appointed OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media and indicated their intention to cooperate closely in this area. It was agreed that the next tripartite meeting would be held at Strasbourg, under the chairmanship of the Council of Europe.

15. Pursuant to the decision taken in January 1997 to enhance the sharing of information through electronic means, information technology experts met twice, under the chairmanship of OSCE, at Vienna in November 1997, and at Geneva in January 1998. At the latter meeting, it was agreed that an operations database would be set up and that a pilot project on activities in the Caucasus would be created, with a view to further improving coordination among participants and strengthening their early warning capabilities. The database has been established at the United Nations Office at Geneva, with the involvement of several organizations affiliated with the tripartite process.

16. During the past year, cooperation between the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and OSCE, particularly in the field, further accelerated. Joint projects and action became an important factor in the advancement of democratic institution-building and good governance, promotion of human and minority rights, and establishment of a framework for donor coordination. In several countries, the offices of UNDP resident representatives provided support and facilitated short-term OSCE missions, in particular those related to election monitoring. In turn, ODIHR organized workshops at Warsaw and Stockholm on electoral assistance for UNDP local staff members. The exchange of information on a regular basis and mutual consultations between the offices of UNDP resident representatives and the staff of OSCE field activities have also become an established practice.

17. Steps to enhance cooperation between the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and OSCE were undertaken with regard to the economic dimension of security. The Executive Secretary and the Director of the Energy Division of ECE were the keynote speakers at the Sixth Economic Forum of OSCE, held in June 1998, which was devoted to the security aspects of energy development in the OSCE region. The Parliamentary Assembly of OSCE organized a colloquium, in cooperation with ECE, which was devoted to strengthening cooperation between the two organizations and subregional institutions in Europe. The establishment within the OSCE secretariat of an office of coordinator for economic and environmental activities will further facilitate interaction with ECE on issues related to the economic, social and environmental aspects of security and will help to develop a joint response by the United Nations system and OSCE.

18. Cooperation between United Nations peacekeeping missions, programmes and agencies and OSCE missions and field activities has further strengthened in the countries which have emerged from the former Yugoslavia. The United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina

(UNMIBH) has supported OSCE in activities related to all elections since 1996, including the national elections held on 12 and 13 September 1998. The civil affairs component of UNMIBH served on the OSCE-led inter-agency committees which evaluate the compliance of political party platforms with OSCE electoral rules and regulations. The United Nations Mission has also been working closely with OSCE in media matters. It has provided support for the country-wide OSCE media monitoring effort. At the request of OSCE, UNMIBH in April 1998 nominated its representatives to the OSCE Media Expert Commission. It has also coordinated media policy with OSCE within the Media Support Advisory Group, under the chairmanship of the Office of the High Representative. The United Nations and OSCE worked together actively in monitoring and promoting human rights in the country, *inter alia*, through the activities of the International Police Task Force (IPTF) and the OSCE mission there.

19. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, UNHCR participates in various committees under the chairmanship of OSCE which are overseeing the implementation of the results of the September 1997 municipal elections. This has included cooperation in the elaboration and implementation of the guidelines of 11 May 1998 for the National Election Results Implementation Committee, concerning the return of officials who were elected to municipal councils and governments. Human rights officers of OSCE provide support to the open cities programme of UNHCR, designed to promote the return of minority groups. In this context, the two organizations have initiated consultations aimed at establishing a consolidated returnee monitoring framework, which would involve OSCE structures that deal with human rights and democratic institution-building.

20. During the past year, the United Nations has closely cooperated with OSCE in Croatia. On 15 January 1998, the mandate of the United Nations Transitional Administration in Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES) expired, and OSCE took the lead in monitoring the compliance of Croatia with the obligations assumed under the Basic Agreement signed on 12 November 1995. A smooth transition was ensured by excellent interaction between the two organizations. After assuming the major responsibility for monitoring developments in the region, OSCE continued to cooperate with the United Nations Police Support Group. In accordance with an understanding on the distribution of labour, the Police Support Group monitored the functioning of the Croatian police in their response to crimes related to returnees, while OSCE monitored activities of the civilian agencies involved with the return of refugees and displaced persons, including the housing commissions. The devolution of the functions of the United Nations Police Support Group to OSCE was completed on 15 October 1998. The close interaction between the United Nations Police Support Group and its OSCE successors has ensured continuity.

21. There is close cooperation between the OSCE and UNHCR missions in Croatia with regard to the two-way return of refugees and displaced persons. The OSCE mission was invited to participate as an observer in the joint working group on the return of refugees and displaced persons, established on 23 April 1997 by the Government, UNTAES and UNHCR. After the withdrawal of UNTAES in January 1998, the OSCE mission became a full member of the joint working group. In an effort to further strengthen cooperation, the UNHCR and OSCE missions, together with the European Commission Monitoring Mission (ECMM), established the return facilitation group to monitor the implementation of the programme of return adopted by the Government of Croatia. Within the context of the group, UNHCR and the OSCE mission in Croatia have signed letters of agreement establishing area return facilitation groups at the local level.

22. In the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP) has continued close cooperation with the spillover monitoring mission of OSCE, based on the principles of cooperation on issues of mutual concern adopted on 15 April 1993. Within this framework, UNPREDEP is assisting the OSCE mission in monitoring and reporting on any developments in the border areas adjacent to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the Head of the OSCE Mission at Skopje have undertaken several joint initiatives aimed at underscoring the determination of the international community to further strengthen peace and stability in the Republic. Regular meetings between the staff of the two missions for the purpose of exchanging views and ensuring an effective complementarity of action have been institutionalized at all levels. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has also established frequent contact with the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities concerning developments in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

23. United Nations programmes and agencies and the United Nations Secretariat are closely cooperating with OSCE in Albania, where OSCE has retained the political lead since the establishment of its presence there in April 1997. A tripartite target-oriented meeting on Albania was arranged in April 1998 to discuss the complementary efforts

of the United Nations, OSCE and the Council of Europe. The Chairman-in-Office of OSCE took the initiative in September 1998 of establishing the Group of Friends of Albania to further facilitate coordination of the efforts of the international community to assist Albania. Representatives of the United Nations participated in the first informal meeting of the Group, held at Brussels on 30 September 1998. The diverse interaction between the two organizations includes the development of a strategy for the collection of weapons, the establishment of an independent national human rights or ombudsman institution, and jointly providing a framework for donor coordination.

24. Given the deterioration of the situation in Kosovo, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, since April 1998, the Chairman-in-Office of OSCE has contributed on a regular basis to my reports to the Security Council, which have been prepared pursuant to Security Council resolution 1160 (1998) of 31 March 1998. The Security Council, by its resolution 1203 (1998) of 24 October 1998, endorsed the agreement signed on 16 October 1998 between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and OSCE, which provided for the deployment of a 2,000-strong Verification Mission in Kosovo to monitor compliance with the relevant Security Council resolutions; OSCE thereby assumed the political lead in dealing with the Kosovo crisis. In response to the request of the Security Council, I dispatched a United Nations interdepartmental mission, headed by Mr. de Mistura, to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia for the period from 17 to 27 October. Among other objectives, the mission assessed possible modalities for the coordination of activities between OSCE and United Nations agencies on the ground. In view of the challenge faced by the Kosovo Verification Mission in the logistical and personnel training fields, the United Nations is ascertaining, in its dialogue with OSCE, the kind of assistance that could be provided to the Kosovo Verification Mission by the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi, Italy, and the United Nations Staff College at Turin, Italy. The United Nations will continue to play its role in the humanitarian and human rights areas, with UNHCR acting as the lead humanitarian agency and the United Nations human rights office in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia expanding its activities. In order to facilitate coordination between the Kosovo Verification Mission and UNHCR on the ground, close liaison was established with OSCE at Vienna and with the advance party of the Verification Mission in the field. The complexity and scope of the tasks in Kosovo require coordinated and concerted efforts by all of the actors on the ground. All United Nations agencies operating there will establish lines of communication with the Kosovo Verification Mission in order to achieve the most efficient cooperation and ensure optimal use of the limited resources of the international community.

25. As part of the efforts to find a solution to the conflict in Abkhazia, Georgia, OSCE participated in high-level meetings held at Geneva in November 1997 and July 1998, as well as in meetings of the Coordinating Council and its working groups. Cooperation also included the frequent exchange of information on developments in the area. In this context, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Georgia, at the invitation of the Chairman-in-Office, addressed the Permanent Council of OSCE on 7 May 1998. In accordance with the memorandum of understanding signed between the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and OSCE, the latter deployed a member of its mission in Georgia to the Office for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights in Abkhazia, Georgia. Representatives of the OSCE mission participate, on a regular basis, in monthly democracy donor coordination meetings, arranged by the offices of the World Bank and UNDP at Tbilisi. In addition, the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) has extended logistical assistance to various OSCE delegations visiting the region.

26. In South Ossetia, Georgia, where OSCE is taking the lead in conflict resolution, UNDP is facilitating programmes to benefit both communities, thus contributing to building confidence and strengthening the hand of OSCE in the negotiations. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, through the deployment of its mobile team to South Ossetia, has substantively facilitated the return of refugees and internally displaced persons, providing them with humanitarian assistance, rehabilitating their shelter and promoting reintegration. This contribution to confidence-building and stabilization of the situation was explicitly recognized by the Georgian and South Ossetian leadership.

27. There has been close interaction between OSCE and UNHCR in promoting a flexible system for the acquisition of Ukrainian citizenship by Crimean Tartars who returned to Ukraine after many years in exile. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities have facilitated the conclusion of an agreement between the Governments of Ukraine and Uzbekistan, which simplifies the relevant procedure.

28. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe has retained the lead in conflict resolution with regard to Nagorny Karabakh, Azerbaijan. The United

Nations continues to support the efforts of OSCE and its Minsk Group in this regard, with France, the Russian Federation and the United States of America acting as co-Chairmen. The Chairman-in-Office of OSCE kept the United Nations informed of the monitoring activities of his personal representative on the ground. Reporting to the United Nations on the activities of the Minsk Group co-Chairmen, as provided for by Security Council resolution 884 (1993) of 12 November 1993, has been interrupted since December 1996. In March 1998, the Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights led a joint multi-purpose mission of several international organizations, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations to the Caucasus, in which UNHCR also took part. The UNDP offices at Baku, Yerevan and Tbilisi, as well as UNOMIG, facilitated the mission.

29. As guarantor organizations, the United Nations and OSCE have continued to cooperate closely in providing assistance to the parties in the implementation of the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan. The United Nations is the lead organization in this effort. Representatives of OSCE actively participated in the work of the contact group established at Dushanbe in accordance with the protocol on guarantees. The United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan continues to work closely with the OSCE mission in the country in order to promote human rights and democratic institution-building and to protect Tajik refugees and internally displaced persons. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has handed over the OSCE the responsibility for the protection of returnees and the promotion of human rights in the southern districts of the country. The United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan, UNDP and the OSCE mission in Tajikistan are jointly assisting the Commission on National Reconciliation in drafting amendments to the Constitution and related laws. They have intensified their cooperation in the area of electoral assistance, with a view to implementing relevant provisions of the General Agreement. A joint electoral assessment mission of the United Nations and OSCE is expected to determine the requirements for arranging free and democratic elections. Field offices of the United Nations Office for Project Services and OSCE monitoring teams are also coordinating activities related to the implementation of the General Agreement.

30. During the past year, multifaceted cooperation between the United Nations and OSCE has significantly increased and improved, both at the headquarters level and in the field, thus solidifying the foundation for cooperation between the two organizations in the future.

Notes

[1] At the Summit Conference of heads of State and Government of the participating States of CSCE, held at Budapest on 5 and 6 December 1994, it was agreed to change the name of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, effective 1 January 1995 (see A/49/800–S/1994/1435).